



**NORTH DAKOTA**  
DEPARTMENT *of* HEALTH

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## NEWS RELEASE

For Immediate Release:  
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### **North Dakota Department of Health Reminds Residents To Avoid Dumping Waste Into the State's Water Bodies**

BISMARCK, N.D. – The North Dakota Department of Health is reminding residents that dumping anything into the state's rivers, lakes and other water bodies, either directly or via the storm water system, can harm the quality of the water, according to Jim Collins Jr., environmental scientist with the Department of Health's Division of Water Quality.

Of particular concern is dumping yard waste, especially grass clippings, in rivers, streams and lakes because they pollute the water with organic matter, pesticides and fertilizers. The fertilizer can cause an overgrowth of nuisance plants and algae that deplete the oxygen supply in the water. Low oxygen levels can kill the fish, create conditions that favor rough fish such as carp and bullheads, and reduce game fish populations. In addition, grass clippings plug irrigation intakes and are a nuisance for people who use the water for recreation.

Residents also can help keep local water bodies clean by preventing pollutants from reaching the storm water system. As storm water flows over lawns, driveways and sidewalks, it picks up debris, chemicals, dirt and other pollutants. Many times, storm water is discharged untreated into bodies of water. The U.S. Environmental Protection Agency offers these suggestions for protecting local water bodies:

- Use fertilizers sparingly, and sweep grass clippings off driveways, sidewalks and roads.
- Never dump anything down storm drains.
- Compost yard waste.
- Avoid pesticides; learn about integrated pest management.
- Cover bare spots in yards to prevent erosion.
- Direct downspouts away from paved surfaces.
- Take cars to the car wash, or wash them on the lawn instead of in the driveway.
- Check cars for leaks, and recycle automotive fluids.

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- Pick up after pets.
- Have septic tanks pumped and inspected regularly.

“If we all do our part, we can keep the Missouri River and other valuable water resources clean for today and the future,” Collins said. “Remember: We all live downstream.”

For more information, contact Jim Collins, North Dakota Department of Health, at 701.328.5161.

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